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ABSTRACT

A discussion of the movement to make English the only official language in the United States' multilingual society examines the nature and scope of the movement and draws instructional and language policy implications for teaching situations involving language-minority populations. It draws a relationship between the politics of language diversity and the cognitive, linguistic, and cultural factors associated with the academic movement of language-minority students. The English-only movement and its media coverage are analyzed, and research literature on the effectiveness of use of the home language for instruction is reviewed. It is concluded that the English language, as any other, is capable of coexisting with other languages and cultures, and that such coexistence has greatly enriched the English language and the human experience. It is noted that in countries where bilingualism has become associated with a problem, the countries have deep and complex sociocultural, political, and religious histories that have led to mutual hostilities among language groups. It is further suggested that the conceptual, instructional, and curricular tools for assuring that language diversity is used to enrich and not detract from the society are now available. Forty-three endnotes are provided. (MSE)

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"English-only Movement: Confrontation with Language Diversity"

by

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Abstract

This paper has two purposes: 1) to examine the nature and scope of the English-only movement; and 2) to draw instructional and language policy implications for teaching situations involving language-minority populations. The topic draws a relationship between the politics of language diversity and the cognitive, linguistic and cultural factors associated with the academic achievement of language-minority students. The subject is developed via an analysis of the English-only movement and its pursuant media coverage as well as a review of research literature of the effectiveness of use of the home language for content instruction.

The paper concludes that the English language--just as any other language--is capable of coexisting side by side with other languages and cultures. Such coexistence, moreover, has greatly enriched the English language and thus the human experience. Proponents of English-only movements use certain countries as examples of the harmful effects of bilingualism. Seldom is the point made, however, that such countries have deep and complex sociocultural, political, and religious histories which have led to mutual hostilities. Linguistic controversy is only the tip of an iceberg of inequality.

The fact is that most of the world carrries on with life in a routine yet effective fashion using linguistic diversity for intrinsic and extrinsic reasons. Language diversity, as a powerful and ever present aspect of the United States' multicultural experience, not only enriches the lives of those who use such languages but those of us who come in contact with them. As educators we need to work to assure that the rich and varied sociolinguistic experiences of language minorities are not translated by English-only movements into negative outcomes. We now have the conceptual, instructional and curricular tools with which to begin and continue the exciting task ahead of us.

This paper will be of interest to policy analysts, curriculum planners, administrators and classroom teachers.

Eleven years ago I wrote an article for the Kappan entitled "School Implications of the Peaceful Latino Invasion." (1) Following an examination of the diversity and growth among Hispanics in the United States, I appealed for increased structural and philosophical support for bilingual education. I suggested that an active commitment to bilingual education would not only produce better structures to address the existing and predicted growth of language-minority students but could also stimulate community involvement.

My optimism for bilingual education then was grounded in autobiographical experience, a humanistic philosophy, and embryonic research evidence that carefully designed bilingual programs offered much hope for addressing the psychological, linguistic, cultural and academic needs of limited English proficient (LEP) students. My belief then in bilingual schooling was also anchored in the premise that what is good for the limited English proficient student is also good for democratic pluralism.

Notwithstanding the uneven track record of federally- sponsored programs for language-minority students (established through the Title VII of the Bilingual Education Act in 1968), there is now research evidence that correctly implemented programs are effective. (2) Therefore, I continue to affirm the notion that quality controlled bilingual education is the best curricular approach created to date to enhance language-minority students' self-image, to provide them with immediate access to the content areas through instruction in the home language and in English, and to teach such students English while developing the home language.

The political motivation for the establishment of bilingual education has been perceived by various observers to "range from the modest objective of providing jobs for members of a group, to the more substantial and controversial one of maintaining the use of a 'foreign' language by a considerable population occupying considerable parts of the country." (3) And it is the political motivation that has thus far received the most mileage in the media. Given this reality, it is not surprising that bilingual education has come under suspicion and is carefully monitored by many wardens as to its purpose, status and future. (4)

In 1983 U.S. English, one of the most visible wardens of bilingual education, was born. The advertised purpose of this political action organization is "to promote and defend the use of the English language in the political, economic, and intellectual life of the United States. (5) Its credo holds "that although the right of individuals and groups to use other languages must be respected, national unity requires a common language that is eroding through government-funded bilingual education and voting programs, bilingual electronic media, and the tendency to label language assimilation as a betrayal of native cultures." (6). U.S. English asks for "adoption of a constitutional amendment making English the official language of the U.S.; repeal of laws mandating multilingual ballots and voter registration materials; restriction of government funding for bilingual education to short-term, transitional programs only; and strict enforcement of the English language and civics requirement for naturalization." (7)

Spearheaded in California by former Republican Senator S.I Hayakawa, Honorary Chairman and founder of U.S. English, an English-only initiative, Proposition 63, was put on the ballot on November 4, 1986, after

the California citizen intitiative drive collected one million signatures. As presented to the voters in the California Ballot Pamphlet, General Election, November 4, 1986, the offical title and summary prepared by the Attorney General reads:

> Proposition 63: Official State Language. Initiative Constitutional Amendment. Provides that English is the official language of State of California. Requires Legislature to enforce this provision by appropriate legislation. Requires Legislature and state officials to take all steps necessary to ensure that the role of English as the common language of the state is preserved and enhanced. Provides that the Legislature shall make no law which diminishes or ignores the role of English as the common language. Provides that any resident of or person doing business in state shall have standing to sue the state to enforce these provisions. Summary of Legislative Analyst's estimate of net state and local government fiscal impact: This measure would have not direct effect on the costs of revenues of the state or local governments. (8)

Preceding and immediatly following the 73 percent ratification vote of Proposition 63 in California, the following arresting headlines spotlighted the intense debate generated by the intitiative before the the state and the nation:

Los Angeles Times (Trombley, October 12, 1986)

"English-Only Proposition Kindles Minorities' Fears"

Miami News (Trasvina, August 27, 1986)

"Language on the line: Attorney sees civil rights threat in English-only efforts"

Time (Carney, August 25, 1986)

"English Spoken Here, O.K.?" "A California crusade tries to stamp out bilingualism"

Los Angeles Times (Editorial, October 3, 1986)

"Wrong in Any Language"

Sacramento Bee (Morris, March 17, 1986)

" 'Official English' effort stirs fear of anti-Asian backlash"

Behind the above headlines lies a war of words which is driven by two very incompatible views. On the supporting side of US English and Proposition 63 are those individuals who believe that in fact English needs to be made the official language of the United States as soon as possible to serve as a forceful reminder to immigrants and indigenous language-minorities that they need to learn English and use English as quickly as possible if they intend to become fully affiliated with the American way of life. Supporters also share the view that making English the official language of states would ultimately encourage the court system of this country to protect the English language from the perceived threat of ethnolinguistic populations who supposedly refuse to master English and thus pose a threat to the unity of the nation. In particular, pro-English-only advocates argue that, because of bilingual services, there are currently too many disincentives for the immigrants, refugees and indigenous language-minorities to learn English. As reflected in the previously stated agenda

adopted by the U.S. English movement there is a belief that English will lose its preeminence in society unless some structural obstacles are placed before non-English background persons so that they learn English quickly and use English in public life. Supporters do not argue that the rich multicultural heritage of the nation should be destroyed, but they still maintain that the English language must legally be made the unifying thread in society. Often they cite Canada and Belgium as examples of countries divided along language lines. The inference is that if we are not prudent with our national language policy that similar problems will be faced by the United States. It has, according to pro-English-ony supporters, become increasingly comfortable for ethnolinguistic groups to live in the United States without feeling the pressure to assimilate into the American mainstream. For example, such persons may vote, obtain social and medical services through bilingual means, obtain driver licences through bilingual materials and interpreters, apply for welfare assistance, get marrried in non-English ceremonies, read non-English newspapers, watch ethnic television, and participate in the judicial process through court interpreters.

With respect to education in particular, English-only supporters tend to advocate a vigorous assimilation process of LEP students into the American experience through linguistically restrictive policies which would make sustained uses of the home language for instructional purposes a thing of the past. California Assemblyman Frank Hill (R-Whittier), for example, has suggested that LEP students should be exited from bilingual programs within two years. (9) Stanley Diamond, one of US English's leaders and chairman of the California English Campaign, has said that "bilingual education, used for the maintenance of Spanish language and Hispanic culture is a scandal. The Hispanic dropout rate of more than 50 percent,

largest of any minority, is attributable in part to the failure of bilingual education. Maintenance of foreign languages and cultures is not a government responsibility." (10) Diamond's observation that the state government should not become involved in the development of the home language of non- English background populations appears at least for the moment to be a reality in California. The Governor of California, George Deukmejian, has recently vetoed a bill to extend the bilingual education program there for the next five years. (11) Therefore, the prediction by James Lyons, National Association for Bilingual Education (NABE) Policy Counsel, that the ratification vote would be used as a weapon against the reauthorization of the current California Bilingual Education has come to pass. (12)

But are supporters of US English right when they argue so successfully before the public that we need to protect the English language from an onslaught by foreign languages on U.S. society? What might be the basis for their concern and the rationale for their motivation to push hard to legitimize English through the judicial system as the official language of the nation?

One motivating factor is certainly demographics. During the decade between 1970 and 1980 U.S. society became increasingly more multiracial, multicultural, and multilingual. The demographic trend shows that in these ten years the total population of the United States grew by 11. 6 percent . But when broken down ethnically and racially we get a demographic picture which shows minority groups galloping ahead of the rest of the Caucasian/non-Hispanic population. During that decade Hispanics increased by 61 percent, Native Americans by 71 percent and Asian-Americans by 233 percent . Increased immigration from both Latin America and Asia as

well as high fertility rates within these populations are seen as the major contributing factors for this demographic shift in modern times. (13)

Because Proposition 63 was approved by a three to one margin in California, it is useful to examine the demographic and ethnic features of that state in particular. California has become the Ellis Island of the 1980s. By the year 2000 California is projected to have a minority population hovering between 40 and 50 percent. (14) If the above figures are examined in relation to school-age populations , it is projected that in the year 2000 fifty-two percent of students in California would be categorized as minorities. This is not surprising considering that as recently as 1985 California's minorities represented "47 percent of the 4.15 million students, including more than one-half million limited English proficient students."(15)

Viewed as a testing ground for the U.S. English movement, the victory of Proposition 63 in California is being perceived as a catalyst for similar legislation in other states. As Diamond put it recently, "The victory seems to have resonated with the nervous systems of millions throughout the country. We expect legislation to make English the official language to be introduced in 32 states this year. Eight states already have such laws." (16) The states which Diamond refers to are: California, Nebraska (the other state in the union to have made English its official language through an amendment to the constitution), Illinois, Virginia, Indiana, Kentucky, Georgia and Tennessee. The drive to make English the official language of states and ultimately of the nation is intense. As Trasvina, Legislative Attorney for the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF), indicated to me, "Virtually every day I am receiving news about different states introducing "English as the official language" bills: New York, Connecticut, Ohio, Wyoming, Colorado, Arizona, Texas" (personal communication, January 29,

1987). The ultimate goal is to make an amendment to the U.S. Consitution. Such measures to make English the nation's official language have been introduced in Congress this session. (17)

The argument against the use of state or federal funds to create bilingual schooling in the United States is not new, of course. Almost from its inception in 1968 some educators and policy analysts questioned dual language instruction, especially maintenance bilingual education. They felt that using the home language along with English for instructional purposes was not in the best interest of nation-building. Noel Epstein, for instance, warned ten years ago that the creation of federally sponsored bilingual schooling was tantamount to having a national death wish. For he feared that the concurrent federal sponsorship of one's ethnolinguistic heritage along with the development of the English language and its common cultural counterpart would lead to uncertain political, social, economic, cultural, and educational consequences (18)

His fears are, of course, repeatedly echoed by supporters of English-only movements. Let's look now, however, at the people, the organizations and the arguments against Propopsition 63 and US English. Despite its popularity in California, an impressive array of prominent citizens and organizations perceived Proposition 63 as being divisive, discriminatory, racist, xenophobic and unnecessary. Those who spoke out against the proposition included the League of Women Voters; the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce; the State Superintendent of Schools; the State Board of Ecucation; the Los Angeles, San Francisco and Alameda County Boards of Education; Stanford President Donald Kennedy; and the Conference of Roman Catholic Bishops. As Trasvina pointed out to me "They can hardly be accused of hostility toward English or apathy toward education. Similary, in

December of 1986 the National Council of Teachers of English came out against English-only efforts" (personal communication, January 29, 1987). The irony, of course, is that while many leading politicians, academic, civic and religious leaders, ethnic group organizations and leading newspaper editorials have come out in strong opposition to this restrictive language policy, the voters and legislators in many states thus far have affirmed the importance of introducing bills to make English the official language. This fact led Gerda Bikales, US English executive director, to remark, "Nobody loved us-- except the American people." (19) Lyons sees the implications of Proposition 63 as follows:

> Clearly, passage of Proposition 63 presages a period of instensified controversy over the rights of language-minority Americans. While Proposition 63 will be tested in courts, the larger battle over language rights will continue to be waged in the realm of public opinion.
>
> . . . NABE members in other states should not dismiss proposition 63 as California's problem, just another in a string of political fads, political oddities, political eccentricities. When fundamental rights like public language usage and effective education are at stake, complacency can have disastrous consequences. (20)

With respect to bilingual education, Proposition 63 could make possible suits against the state for its support of bilingual education programs. And the arguments, according to Trasvina, may go something like this:"They'll have to prove bilingual programs diminish or ignore English, and we'll argue they ultimately enhance English." (21)

In the legal arena US English actually appears to many observers to be on shaky ground. According to Combs and Trasvina,

> Amendments to the Constitution fundamentally set out to correct institutional or systemic denial of civil rights, and are therefore necessary adjustments to preserve equal opportunity and equality for all citizens. As such, any critical analysis of the English language Amendment must answer two questions. Exactly whose rights are being violated because English is not the official "constitutional" language? Who exactly will benefit from passage of this amendment?

> Since the underlying assumption of the English Language Amendment, at least in theory, is the need to protect English--and hence English speakers--from the growing encroachment of foreign languages and cultures, then one might argue that the "cultural" or "linguistic" rights of a majority group have been violated. Indeed, it is not difficult to understand the chagrin of the monolingual English speaker when confronted by the increasing use of other languages in areas which were previously monolingual.

> But arguing that the "traditional" status of English is in jeopardy does not justify a constitutional amendment to restore its "primacy." English speakers still retain full access to equal education and employment opportunity, are entitled to full protection under the law, and may utilize the print or electronic media of their choice. Thus, the conclusion from the availability

> of such freedoms is that the civil and constitutional rights of monolingual English speakers are not violated by lack of an official language. (22)

Despite the validity of non-English usage from the constitutional point of view, it is not surprising that given the mixed reviews bilingual schooling has received from the press to date, the public is confused as to its raison d'etre. Illustrative of this point is Education Secretary William J. Bennett's recent statement to the New York Times regarding the status of bilingual education. He was quoted as saying that "we have no evidence that the children whom we sought to help--that the children who deserve our help--have benefited," and he concluded by saying that bilingual education has gone astray from its original purpose and has come to be "confused as to purpose and overbearing as to means." (23) Let us review then what was the original purpose of bilingual education.

The first federal legislation for bilingual education, passed by Congress in 1968 under Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, stipulated that services were to be provided to "children who come from environments where the dominant language is other than English" and from families with incomes below $3,000 per year. The 1974 amendments changed the law to include all children of "limited-English-speaking ability" (LES), ending the low-income requirement, and the 1978 law expanded the definition additionally to include children of limited English proficiency (LEP). The last change allows students to remain in a program until they reach full proficiency in English rather than requiring that they be tested and exited solely on the basis of oral skills. (24) Also, the three purposes of the 1968 act were to "(1) increase English language skills, (2) maintain and perhaps increase mother-tongue skills, and (3) support the cultural heritage

of the student." (25) From the start of federally sponsored bilingual education, two nagging questions have played central stage: who should be served? and for how long? As bilingual education has evolved in the United States, most of the programs have tended to be of the transitional nature. This means that students should be exited from bilingual classrooms into the all English curriculum approximately by the end of the third year. But "a district must provide predictive data which show that such students are ready to make the transition into English and will educationally succeed in content areas and the educational program in which he or she is to be placed." (26)

Now proponents of Proposition 63 are saying that LEP students are staying too long in bilingual programs, that it is taking as long as four to five years to be exited from bilingual programs into all English classrooms and that bilingual schooling is ineffective. Connected to the length of time that such students spend in bilingual classrooms is the issue of rate of assimilation of immigrants into mainstream American society, along with the issue of the quality of education that they are receiving.

Setting aside the political arguments for or against English only legislation, when one examines the consequences of schooling in the lives of language-minority students, there emerges a mixed picture: some are prospering in schools while many are not. For example, students of Asian-American ancestries and Cuban-American ancestry (predominantly the children of the professional class which exited Cuba right after Castro took over in 1959) tend to do well in U.S. schools. But on the other hand students of Mexican-American, Puerto Rican, Native-American, Afro-American, and Hawaiian parentage have tended not to prosper as well in our schools. And yet some some of the latter students, despite the overwhelming odds against

them, do well academically. Why is this so? To what extent is the student, the home background, the language, the general environment, socioeconomic status, and/or the school environment responsible for the positive or negative academic results?

In the 1960s social scientists, researchers, educational planners and practitioners suggested that the problem with many minority students was that they came from so-called "culturally deprived" or "culturally deficient" environments. Essentially the view expressed indicated that the beliefs, values, behaviors, academic and linguistic backgrounds of such students did not match or were inferior to those of the school environment. Therefore, to improve schooling opportunies for language-minorities and low-income students, the strategy was fairly straightforward: "change the child--not the teacher or the teaching methods or the political structure of school control." (27) This usually meant that LEP students were expected to adapt to the established school culture as quickly as possible without the schooling environment making compromises in the direction of the student. Accepting conformity to the school culture included learning standard English as quickly as possible, and adopting mainstream values, attitudes, skills and norms. LEP students usually failed if they did not conform to the implicit and explicit agenda of the school.

In contrast to the above unidirectional perspective, which pinned the academic failure on the language-minority student and his or her environment and not on the school, there has more recently been a tendency among social scientists to view the interaction of schooling and society in a more complex and dynamic fashion. This more all-inclusive interpretation sees a complex set of factors interacting dynamically to influence the linguistic and academic achievement of language-minority students. Rather

than attributing academic achievement or failure to any one set of factors-- e.g., cultural deficit, cultural mismatch, or insensitivity on the part of the school-- the current trend is to examine the contextual interaction of a complex set of factors. No longer is the simplistic assumption that LEP students do not do well academically because they are either limited or non English dominant accepted ipso facto. That is, becoming integrated into society via success in school is a very complicated process which takes time, even under the best of circumstances. But participation in another society is even more unpredictable when we are dealing with populations whose sociocultural realities are quite different from the dominant society. Cortes (1986), addressing himself to a complex set of factors which contribute to the schooling achievement of language-minorities has developed a Contextual Interaction Model. In it he argues that such societal factors as the family, community, non-school institutions, the mass media, heritage, culture, and ethnicity, attitudes, perceptions, socioeconomic status and educational level serve as the bedrock in which the educational edifice is built. More specifically he feels that the nature of the educational program, student qualities, and instructional elements are strongly impacted by the former societal factors. (28) In other words, there are a host of macro and micro factors which in concert influence what kind of schooling success language-minority are having. And this in turn impacts the rate of assimilation and acculturation of students into maintream society.

Proponents of the English-only movement, I believe, fail to understand the intricacies of this web of push, pull and holding factors associated with communication across cultures. Reflective of this over-simplified view is California Assemblyman Frank Hill's comment that "We're going to get away from teaching in the native language. We are going to

teach'em in English." (29) But movement from one culture to another is an uneasy balancing act, and the orchestration of such movement by schools requires an understanding of processes by which people establish contact points with the other culture. One such point has to do with language acquisition. The assumption, of course, is that in order for persons of different cultures to understand each other they must have a lingua franca, in the case of the United States, English. And no one on either side of the US English issue would disagree that learning English is important on two counts: it serves as a contact point with the larger society and also as the instrument for academic prosperity in the schools, without which such students will not be fully affiliated into American society.

But to understand the process by which such students acquire English, the following questions need to be answered: How long does it take on the average for a LEP student to become fluent in conversational English? What role does conversational English play in the school of life of LEP learners? How long does it take for students with no prior schooling experience to develop the type of academic language essential for success in school? And what roles do age, prior knowledge, and experiences play in acquiring a second language? Given that the above questions focus on the rate and nature of the fluency in English needed for both societal and academic success, it would seem that Proponents of Proposition 63 and US English would be interested in knowing the answers. For the success or failure of their proposal to exit LEP children from bilingual programs prematurely could have potentially damaging sociocultural, linguistic and cognitive consequences.

During the past 15 years linguists have made considerable progress in understanding first-and second-language acquisition. "Their research

suggests that the developmental process is similar and predictable for both children and adults. Thus the acquisition of a second language requires time and experiences that are tailored to a learner's developmental stage" (30) We learn our first language, as children, in the context of a natural, interesting and meaningful interaction with the environment. Such an environment, of course, is immensly enriched through the contact with peers and adult language models which provide additional cues as to meaning. Because of this strongly contextualized environment, speakers tend to take communication short cuts--incomplete responses, a limited vocabulary, and many nonverbal cues. Cummins (1980) refers to this type of language as Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS) and suggests that an average non-English-speaking student learns to communicate at this level after about two years of instruction (31) This ability to get along in the world conversationally enables LEP students to make everyday conversational contact with their English-speaking peers. And thus it provides a pivotal role in the acculturation process of such students, especially to the subculture of school life. In addition such a face-to-face communication skill serves as an initial platform for building a self-image in social relationships.

However, even though a LEP student may seem to be making rapid progress in the acquisition of English judging from the informal observations in the social environment of the school setting, it is very important to keep in mind that such control of BICS does not necessarily equip such a student for the more cognitively demanding tasks in the curriculum. And this is where the educational effects of Proposition 63 and US English could become particularly damaging. Cognitive tasks require a second developmental level beyond BICS which "consists of the language used in school and many facets

of adult life. Here the context is less clear; instead, communication depends on a speaker's (or writer's) ability to manipulate the vocabulary and syntax with precision." (32) Research by Cummins (1980,) indicates that, as measured in standarized tests, children with little or no prior schooling experience attain English native-like control of cognitive-academic language proficiency (CALP) in about 5 to 7 years. (33) Again, as in the case of BICS, it is crucial for teachers working with language-minority students to be aware of the fact that to do well academically students need more than conversational skills in English. Especially in the upper grades, success in school is to a large extent developed and measured through lecture and paper-and-pencil tasks, which are largely decontextualized. Therefore, LEP students need to have control of the decontextualized formal language in order to achieve academically. If the Cummins' research finding that the acquisition of CALP may take from 5 to 7 years is accurate, then it certainly runs counter to the suggestion by proponents of Proposition 63 and US English that LEP students should be exited from bilingual programs within two years and that the use of the home language for instructional purposes should be discouraged.

Other important points to keep in mind related to limited English proficient students and school failure is that age and prior schooling experience are important factors to consider when attempting to understand how quickly these students will learn to handle both BICS and CALP. Again, Cummins' research (34) concludes that prior acquired knowledge and skills transfer automatically to the new language. This is known as the common underlying proficiency (CUP) for both languages . Of import to language-minority educators is Cummins' conclusion on the intructional use of both the home language (L1) and English (L2):

> The results of research on bilingual programs show that minority children's L1 can be promoted in school at no cost to the development of proficiency in the majority language .... The data clearly show that well-implemented bilingual programs have had remarkable success in developing English academic skills and have proved superior to ESL-only programs in situations where direct comparisons have been carried out. (35)

Thus, contrary to the suggestions by Hill and Diamond, using the home language of the learner is not detrimental to his or her academic and language growth in English.

Finally, it is not fair for advocates of the English-only movement to suggest that bilingual instruction is largely responsible for the poor academic track record of language-minority students as reflected on standarized test scores and high drop- out rates. Admitting the uneven programmatic performance of federally and state supported bilingual education to date, the historical facts are such that one can readily observe that stigmatized language-minorities such as low-income Native Americans, Puerto Rican-Americans and Chicanos did not on the whole prosper academically or linguistically before the bilingual experiment was set in motion. In fact, high drop-out rates, inadequate English language skills, poor academic achievement and poverty were used as the rationale for the creation of bilingual education legislation in the first place. Moreover, despite the presence of bilingual education in the public's eyes, the reality is that a very large proportion of LEP students have not received any bilingual instruction.

Because the Lau v. Nichols U.S. Supreme Court decision of 1974 will not allow school districts to ignore the linguistic and academic needs of LEP students, it is therefore illegal to turn the clock back and use the inhumane

and linguistically unproductive sink-or-swim approach. Instead, Proponents of Proposition 63 and US English would like to see an instructional approach which would teach high-intensity English to LEP students with minimal use of the home language. The point guards identified thus far to carry this ambitious and problematic mission are ESL, "a structured language-acquisition program designed to teach English to students whose native language is not English" (36); structured immersion, a program model which provides language-minority students with instruction totally in an ESL format, with native-language tutoring support as needed during the first year or two; (37) and sheltered or comprehensible English, an instructional technique in which teachers explain complex concepts in the content areas using instructional strategies which "include simplification of the teacher's speech and the lavish use of visual aids and other nonverbal clues to the meaning of a particular lesson." (38) Reluctantly, they also endorse transitional bilingual education with the understanding that most of the instruction should be carried out in English, not the home language. Yet, as noted earlier, research on second language acquisition does not generally support the methods suggested by proponents of Proposition 63 and US English as complete approaches, even though ESL, and sheltered or comprehensible English do, of course, have a place in the bilingual curriculum.

One point needs to be made clear: there are no quick procedures for acquiring another language, another schooling process or another culture. These processes take time to incubate and mature. While it is true that teaching English at an accelerated pace has been an important mission of bilingual and ESL teachers, they likewise believe that use of L1 helps build self-confidence, good citizenship and a sound base of academic skills. There

is no dichotomy between English language proficiency and home language maintenance. As the rest of world demonstrates, there is "room" in children's brains for two languages. And such truly competent bilingual students constitute an important social and economic resource for the United States vis-a-vis an increasingly interdependent world.

Methodological issues related to language acquisition and academic achievement aside, I believe it is terribly important to understand the sociolinguistic rationale for language loyalty. As with many other aspects of life, humans tend to be attracted toward what is rewarded. If, for instance, a given community of speakers finds it necessary to maintain a language because it satisfies spiritual, social, intellectual, technical, scientific, economic and political needs, then the chances that that particular linguistic community will survive are enhanced. An important point to keep in mind then is that languages survive because they fulfill highly desirable human needs. As regards the use of Spanish in California, for example, it is crucial to understand not only demographics from within but the fact that California's communion with Mexico serves as a daily reminder to its citizens of the functional values of the Spanish and English languages. Both languages serve strongly felt instrinsic and extrinsic human needs. And even though the vast majority of immigrants over time will inevitably choose to learn English while concurrently experiencing some ancestral language loss (39), the fact remains that this nation's national boundries with the world remain officially and unofficially ajar. And as long as this is the case there will always be a recreation of language patterns in any area of the U.S. in which population needs stimulate a multilingual infrastructure which responds to economic, social, cultural, humanitarian, and political realities.

Coupled with the above is the fact that today's immigrants and indigenous language-minorities--Native Americans, Puerto Ricans and Mexican-Americans --often do not see participation in their traditional yet evolving life styles to be in conflict with their concurrent participation in mainstream American society. This position, commonly known in the social science and educational literature as the salad bowl or mosaic metaphor, is not warmly viewed by proponents of US English. They prefer the traditional melting pot ideology which in theory would transform all citizens, regardless of their race, language, religion, ethnicity or national origin into an American person with all the appropriate birthrights associated with our democracy. But, as Hechinger (1978), points out "The reason why the melting pot is in disrepute today, and rightly so, is not because the concept was not a good one but because it was used dishonestly. Some people were excluded from the unified country. The melting pot's main failure was that it did not include all persons from all groups at all times." (40)

Whether a language-minority chooses the melting pot or the salad bowl, one thing, however, is clear clear: immigrants and indigenous language- minorities are eager to learn English or to improve their English skills (41) , if for no other reason than that they are impatient to share in the goods and services of U.S. society. They don't need a law to remind them that English is the "official" language of the United States. They, along with the rest of the world, know that very well. But it is also very clear that language diversity is a powerful and natural reality of the world we live in. As Grosjean (1982) puts it "Bilingualism is present in practically every country of the world, in all classes of society, in all age groups; in fact, it has been estimated that half the world's population is bilingual." (42)

As things stand right now, and as history has proven, the English

language-- just as any other language-- is capable of coexisting side by side with other languages and cultures. Such coexistence has greatly enriched the English language and thus the human experience. Though proponents of US English use certain countries as examples of the harmful effects of bilingualism, seldom is the point made that such countries have deep and complex sociocultural, political, and religious histories which have led to mutual hostilities which are now interpreted as motivated by linguistic controversy. Seldom is the point made that most of the world carries on with life in a routine yet effective fashion by using linguistic diversity for instrinsic and extrinsic reasons.

With Fallows (1986), I don't believe "that English is some kind of fragile blossom, about to be blown apart by harsh blasts from the Spanish-speaking world." (43) One thing we can learn from history is that wherever languages have been persecuted or restricted they have tended, like Christianity, to survive. Perhaps US English and Proposition 63 proponents should tone down the war of words and come to the realization that language diversity will continue to be very much part of the future of the American experience, officially or otherwise. This, of course, means that English will continue to be an integral and important part of the pluralistic linguistic menu. English, as the language of power, prestige, technology, military might, entertainment, and science is very much a highly coveted commodity throughout the non-English speaking world. To confirm that just check phone directories and newspapers in the U.S. and worldwide advertising English language institutes! The English language does not need legislation to survive. And the limited English proficient children of this nation, a precious linguistic resource, can only suffer from such legislation.

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3. Doyce B. Nunis, Jr., "Bilingualism and Biculturalism: A Time for Assessment," in Martin Ridge, ed., The New Bilingualism: An American Dilemma (Los Angeles, CA: University of Southern California Press, 1981), pp. 23-27.

4. Carlos J. Ovando, "Bilingual/Bicultural Education: Its Legacy And Its Future," Phi Delta Kappan, April 1983, p. 564.

5. Katherine Gruber, ed., Encyclopedia of Associations, (Detroit, MI: Gale Research Co., 1986), p. 1402.

6. Ibid.

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8. March Fong Su and John L. Vickerman, California Ballot Pamphlet: General Election (Sacramento, CA: California Office of State Printing, November 4, 1986), p. 44.

9. "Hill Unveils Major Bilingual Education Reform Legislation," Press Release (State Capitol, Sacramento, CA: January 22, 1987) p. 2.

10. Stanley Diamond, "We need laws now to keep English first," USA Today, February 13, 1987, p. 12A.

11. "We don't need laws to put English first, (February 13,1987) USA Today, p. 12A.

12. James J. Lyons, "The View from Washington," NABE News, Fall 1986, p.11.

13. Carlos E. Cortes, "The Education of Language Minority Students: A Contextual Interaction Model," in California State Department of Education, Beyond Language: Social and Cultural Factors in Schooling Language Minority Students (Los Angeles: Evaluation, Dissemination, and Assessment Center, California State University, Los Angeles, 1986), pp. 8-9.

14. Ibid., p. 9.

15. Ibid., p. 10.

16. Stanley Diamond, op. cit., p. 12A.

17. USA Today, February 13, 1987, p.12A.

18. Noel Epstein, Language, Ethnicity, and the Schools: Policy Alternatives for Bilingual-Bicultural Education (Washington, DC: Institute for Educational Leadership, The George Washington University, 1977) pp. 1-8.

19. Up'date, November-December 1986, p. 3.

20. James J. Lyons, op. cit., p. 11.

21. "Backers ask just English in schools: Also targeted are road tests, welfare." (November 8, 1986). Miami Herald, p. 14B.

22. Mary Carol Combs and John Trasvina, "Legal Implications of the English Language Amendment," in The "English Plus" Project (The League of United Latin American Citizens: June 1986), pp. 26-27.

23. Marcia Chambers, "Ending Bilingual Schooling," The New York Times, December 9, 1986, p. C13.

24. Carlos J. Ovando and Virginia P. Collier, Bilingual and ESL Classrooms, pp. 26-27.

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26. United States Office for Civil Rights, Remedies available for eliminating past educational practices ruled unlawful under Lau v. Nichols (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1975).

27. Carlos J. Ovando and Virginia P. Collier, Bilingual and ESL Classrooms, pp. 114-115.

28. Carlos Cortes, op. cit., pp. 17-19.

29. Marcia Chambers, op.cit., p. C13.

30. Carlos J. Ovando, Phi Delta Kappan, April 1983, p. 566.

31. Jim Cummins, "The entry and exit fallacy in bilingual education," NABE Journal, Spring 1980, p. 53.

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33. Jim Cummins, op. cit., p. 53

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38. Patricia Ward Biederman, "New Tool in Teaching the Non-Fluent," in the Los Angeles Times, January 13, 1987, Part I, p. 1.

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